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FOR: State AF/C Kevin Aiston
Fax #: 202-736-4872
FROM: U.S. Embassy Kigali
SUBJECT: Draft Cable - Def Min Cabinet Director

Drafted: Pol-Mil: AMarley
Cleared: Charge: JLeader

SUBJECT: Meeting With Defense Ministry Cabinet Director

1. Summary: Pol-Miloff met with the Rwandan Defense Ministry Cabinet Director on 16 August to discuss developments to date within the RPA. End Summary.
2. AF Pol-Miloff Marley met with the Cabinet Director of the Rwandan Ministry of Defense, LTC Andrew RWIGAMBA, on 16 August to discuss recent developments affecting the Rwandan Patriotic Army and the security situation within Rwanda. The Defense Ministry Staff, as well as the Army staff, are working on a daily basis in the old FAR headquarters buildings at Camp Kigali. There are no plans at this time for the Ministry of Defense personnel to resume operations at the old Defense Ministry facility located next to the U.S. Embassy in Kigali.
3. LTC Rwigamba asked what LTC Marley's observations were to date concerning the RPA. Pol-Miloff touched first on the issue and risks of soldiers operating security checkpoints on highways around the country. While in almost every case the RPA personnel have been professional and courteous, there have been two incidents at one checkpoint in which RPA personnel have tried to beg drinks or cigarettes from the civilian dressed Pol-Miloff. Marley explained that in both cases he identified himself as a soldier and reprimanded the soldiers for unprofessional behavior, and that the soldiers probably would have accepted a "no" answer without becoming difficult. Additionally, however, the danger is that by even soliciting handouts from travellers, the RPA risks acquiring a reputation for extortion; many civilians would find such a request, when made by an armed soldier, to be threatening. The Cabinet Director concurred, noting that it would be an easy step from a soldier asking for cigarettes to demanding a driver's watch. He also indicated that RPA personnel are frequently rotated among various security posts in an effort to minimize their opportunities for setting up a racket, a claim which Pol-Miloff can confirm.
4. Pol-Miloff then turned to the question of discipline, and respect for personal property and human rights. During the war, the RPF had been noted for the excellent military discipline displayed by its personnel. More recently, however, RPA personnel have been implicated in cases of looting, appropriation of residences, and the disappearance and possible killings of returning refugees. These problems tend to indicate that the RPA

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is either suffering a breakdown in military discipline or else the RPA leadership is ordering its personnel to commit illegal acts. Whichever the case, it was harming the RPA's professional reputation. LTC Rwigamba acknowledged that the army was experiencing disciplinary problems and that the RPA leadership was working seriously to address them.

5. On the issue of human rights, the Cabinet Director claimed that the RPA was investigating each allegation, had made arrests of RPA personnel suspected of human rights violations, and was holding them for ultimate trial by civilian authorities. Marley replied that if that were the case, the RPA should publicize the information both to enhance its international reputation and to demonstrate to refugees that are fearful of returning that the rule of law applies to military personnel as well. Further, the RPA should be as transparent as possible. They should allow human rights specialists access to the soldiers while they are prisoners and permit international observers at their trials. Rwigamba claimed that the arrest of the soldiers had been made known to the ICRC, and that representatives of the Red Cross and Amnesty International had visited the soldiers in prison on 11 or 12 August. Pol-Miloff recommended that the Rwandan Government make the information more generally known and invite UNHRC monitors to visit the prisoners.

6. Pol-Miloff asked about RPA intentions concerning the Kidogos (boy soldiers). The Cabinet Director acknowledged that a large number (non-specific) of them were in the RPA. He said that before 6 April there were only a few hundred, but that many had subsequently joined the RPA. He claimed that most of the new ones had been orphaned by the genocide campaign, and that they had joined the RPA for protection and as surrogate family. ^{LTC} ~~the boys need to be taken out of the RPA,~~ both for the good of the boys and for the Government of Rwanda's international reputation. The quandry in the short term is that no schools exist in which to place the boys, and they are too old for normal Rwandan orphanages.

7. Marley indicated that he was aware that FAR Major General Rusatira, who had been a supporter of the peace process and was not implicated in the massacres, had returned to Kigali and reported to RPA officials. What was the RPA planning to do in his case? Rwigamba responded that in addition to Rusatira, a total of 226 ex-FAR officers and men had returned to Rwanda and surrendered themselves to the RPA. No decision has yet been made concerning

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their integration into a new national army. Pol-Miloff inquired whether the Rwandan Government has considered employing MG Rusatira to relay to refugees and displaced persons the message that it was possible to return home in safety. The Cabinet Director seemed surprised both by the utility of the idea, and the fact that no one in the GOR seems to have thought of it.

8. The Cabinet Director closed the meeting by stating that the Rwandan Government was becoming concerned about Zaire allowing ex-government officials in the Goma and Bukavu areas to remain organized as military units, intimidate the refugee population, and to make threats of invasion into Rwanda. Rwigamba said that Rwanda would have to take action against Zaire if this were allowed to continue. He said that if Zaire wanted to permit guerrillas to operate freely, that the GOR could in turn support already existing Zairois guerrillas. The Cabinet Director and Pol-Miloff looked at a terrain map of western Rwanda, noting that Rwanda benefits from the natural obstacles posed by the volcanoes and Lake Kivu, which are augmented by friendly militaries in Uganda and Burundi, thereby channeling any potential FAR invasion into two relatively easily defended gaps (the river crossings at Cyangugu in the south, and the area near Gisenyi between Lake Kivu and the mountains). LTC Rwigamba acknowledged that there was little chance of a serious invasion, but was clearly incensed by the nuisance posed by the FAR, and the political affront to the Rwandan Government by Zaire's open lack of action in the matter.

9. Comment: Pol-Miloff left the meeting with the impression that RPA support to Zairois insurgents is not imminent, but that the GOR clearly wants a message passed to the Government of Zaire that it should not permit the activities of the FAR to continue on Zairois territory. End Comment.

10. Bio Data. LTC Rwigamba was a key member of the RPF negotiating team at Arusha which was headed by now-President Bizimungu. He is about 35, grew up in Uganda, holds a law degree from Makerere University (Kampala), and joined the RPF in the mid-1980's. He told Charge Leader at Arusha that he "went to the bush" after his family was caught between Ugandan President Obote's order to expell Rwandan refugees and Rwandan President Habyarimana's refusal to allow them to return to Rwanda.

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